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1984 Seaman A. Knapp Memorial Lecture

A Major International Dimension
for U.S. Colleges of Agriculture —
An Imperative

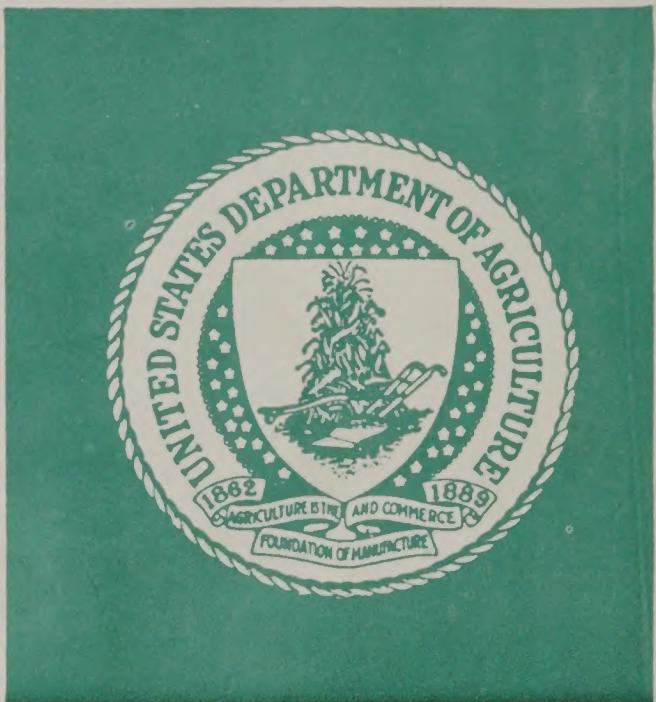


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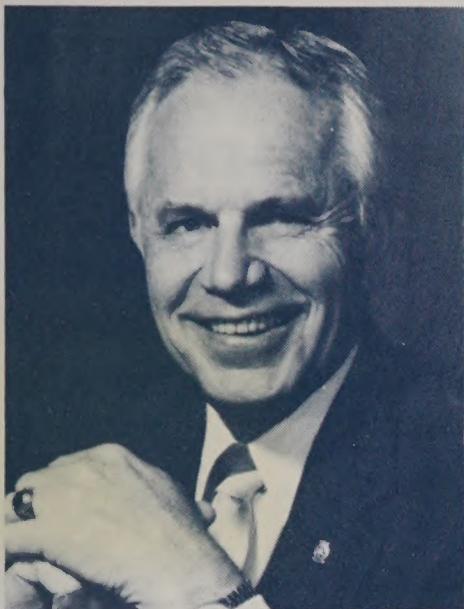
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Dr. E. T. York, the 1984 Seaman A. Knapp Memorial Lecturer, is chancellor emeritus, State University System of Florida, and currently serving as chairman of the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development.

A native of DeKalb County, Alabama, Dr. York achieved his B.S. and M.S. degrees from Auburn University, and his Ph.D. from Cornell University. He has held research, teaching, and administrative assignments at North Carolina State and Auburn Universities. Dr. York was appointed administrator of the Federal Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, from 1961-63. He then served as vice president, executive vice president, and interim president for agricultural affairs at the University of Florida.

He became chancellor of the State University System of Florida in 1975, where he served for 5 years. He then returned to the University of Florida, where he is presently pursuing his long-term interests in world hunger and malnutrition.

Dr. York has served under the five most recent Presidents on special assignments at the national level. At the request of President Reagan, Dr. York served as chairman of three Presidential Missions on Agricultural Development to Central America and the Caribbean, Egypt, and Liberia.

He has traveled to more than 60 foreign countries and served as a consultant for the Department of State, the Agency for International Development, White House, and foreign governments in the fields of education, agriculture, and economic development.

In 1983, Dr. York was appointed U.S. representative to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research. This worldwide body provides the technical and programmatic guidance to the 13 international agricultural research centers which are contributing significantly to increasing food production.

Dr. York has received numerous awards of state, national, and international prominence. He is listed in *Who's Who in America*, *Who's Who in the World*, and other biographical sources.

He is an active member of numerous professional, civic, and church organizations. Currently Dr. York is vice president of the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce and member of the 3-H Committee of Rotary International.

A Major International Dimension for U.S. Colleges of Agriculture — An Imperative

Seaman A. Knapp Memorial Lecture
Presented by
Dr. E. T. York
at the Annual Meeting of
National Association of State Universities
and Land-Grant Colleges

Denver, Colorado
November 12, 1984

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The Extension Service, USDA, sponsors the prestigious Seaman A. Knapp Memorial Lecture to commemorate the life and work of Dr. Seaman A. Knapp—the father of the Cooperative Extension concept. Knapp's success as a national leader of the farm and home demonstration system helped bring about the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, which resulted in organization of a Cooperative Extension Service in every state. The Knapp Memorial Lecture series, established in 1980, is also a tribute to the proud history of the Cooperative State Extension Service.

May I commend the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Extension Service for its sponsorship of the Seaman A. Knapp Memorial Lecture series. It is most appropriate that there be such recognition of the man who not only is considered the father of the Cooperative Extension Service but who also helped to draft and secure the passage of the legislation which created the State Agricultural Experiment Stations. This remarkable man served as president of one of the Nation's land-grant colleges and is credited with the establishment of the agricultural curriculum in that college. In addition, he was one of the founders of this Association.

I am aware of no person who has contributed more to the molding of our Nation's land-grant agricultural system and related programs than Seaman Knapp. It is a great personal privilege to be a part of this lecture series which recognizes his wisdom and foresight and honors his memory.

United States — A Developing Nation

Seaman Knapp was a major contributor to the development of those institutions which have undergirded and, in large measure, made possible the creation of the most productive and efficient agriculture of any nation on earth. At the time of Knapp's efforts, some 100 years ago, the United States was still very much a developing nation with many conditions similar to those found in Third World countries today. Farming was more of an art than a science, and a high proportion of our population was engaged in producing our Nation's food and fiber requirements. Knapp was instrumental in helping to create those institutions necessary for the development of the human capital and for the generation and dissemination of technology essential for making the U.S. agricultural sector more productive and efficient.

It should be noted that these are the same types of institutions which are badly needed to facilitate the advancement of agriculture in Third World countries today. For many years, U.S. colleges of agriculture have been challenged to assist in the development of the agricultural teaching, research, and extension institutions in Third World countries — institutions which are vital to these nations just as they were to our own.

Truman's Point IV Program

This was a challenge embodied in Point IV of President Harry Truman's 1949 inaugural address when he proposed that the United States "embark on a bold, new program for making the scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas of the world." While President Truman did not refer specifically to assistance in agriculture, it was recognized then, as it is today, that agricultural development is basic to the overall improvement of developing countries and must be given highest priority in whatever is done to assist these countries. A recent World Bank report underscores this point: "Agricultural production is a key factor in the development of most countries. In the poorest countries, it is critical."^{1*}

It may be noted that President Truman's proposal was, in part, a recognition of how the United States has benefited from the contributions of other nations to our own development process and reflected a desire to assist others as we had been helped. Truman's Point IV proposal came approximately 130 years after a former U.S. President had expressed clearly the needs of a young, developing country for assistance in science and technology. In 1820, Thomas Jefferson said: "In an infant country such as ours, we must depend for improvement on the science of other countries, long-established, possessing better means and more advanced than we are. To prohibit us from the benefit of foreign light is to confine us to long darkness." Such a statement could well be echoed by developing countries around the world today.

Contributions by Other Nations

In reflecting on Mr. Jefferson's remarks, it might be noted that other nations have made enormous contributions to the development of agriculture in the United States. In fact, most of the crops and animals produced for food in the United States had their origins in other countries. Norman Meyers recently observed: "Without these foreign infusions, (North) Americans would have their diets limited to cranberries, blueberries, strawberries, pecans, sunflower seeds and little else." Meyers concluded: "The productivity of modern agriculture could not be maintained — let alone expanded — without constant infusion of fresh germ plasm."²

This fact was recognized by Knapp in the late 1890's when he traveled to Japan, China, Malaysia, India, the Philippines, and elsewhere to study the agriculture of these regions and to collect genetic materials to be used for improving crop performance in the United States.

*Figures correspond to References listed on page 18.

University Involvement in Technical Assistance Programs

Truman's Point IV proposals were highly praised around the world and the U.S. Government responded by funding major bilateral and multilateral development assistance programs.

From the beginning, U.S. universities have been keenly interested in these international development efforts and have been active participants in them. In fact, on February 4, 1949 — just a few days after Truman's inaugural speech — the then President of this Association wrote President Truman as follows: ". . . being fully aware that sacrifices are involved in a world program such as you have outlined, I am personally convinced, and our member institutions, collectively, are convinced, that the stability, welfare, and democratic freedom of the world demand the cooperation of all Americans in such a program. We feel that this responsibility is particularly incumbent upon us as colleges and universities. . . ."³

It should be noted that the first Administrator of the Technical Cooperation Administration, the Federal agency charged with implementing the Point IV program, was the president of a land-grant university.

I shall not attempt to review the record of university involvement in the Nation's international development assistance programs over the past 35 years. I might, however, reflect some common perceptions concerning such involvement — with particular reference to work in agriculture.

Many significant contributions have been made by universities to the U.S. development assistance efforts. Yet, there is a general feeling within the university community, and outside, that the potential for universities to contribute to our Nation's international development assistance efforts has not been fully realized and that university activities have not always been totally successful. There have been times during this period when universities have felt that the Agency for International Development (AID) and its predecessor agencies have not been fully supportive of university involvement in such efforts and that they have maintained regulations and procedures which made it difficult for effective university participation.

AID-University Relations and Title XII

The relationship between AID and the university community has been the subject of many papers at earlier meetings of this Association as well as many special studies. Nothing constructive would be served by rehashing all the concerns expressed about this relationship over the years. However, these concerns, along with a firm belief in the university community's continuing potential to make significant contributions to our Nation's development

assistance efforts in agriculture, led Congress, in 1975, to pass Title XII of the Foreign Assistance Act. This legislation, for the first time, provided a Congressional mandate for the involvement of U.S. colleges of agriculture in the Nation's foreign aid programs.

The Title XII program has not eliminated all the friction between universities and AID — nor has it insured that universities will always be successful in their foreign development assistance efforts. As an observer of, and participant in, this relationship over the past quarter of a century, however, I can say without equivocation that, today, there exists the most positive and favorable climate for meaningful cooperation between AID and the university community that has ever existed.

This positive climate is due in part to the Title XII legislation which mandates such cooperation. But it is also due in no small measure to the attitude and philosophy of AID's current leadership which has been very supportive of university involvement in U.S. development assistance activities.

Administrator Peter McPherson has consistently stated that "the highest priority" of this administration "is building and strengthening host country institutions" for education and training for the generation, transfer and dissemination of technology. What better statement could there be of the mission of U.S. colleges of agriculture? And what organizations or institutions could be better equipped in terms of their mission and philosophy to contribute to the development of agriculture in Third World countries than these colleges?

University Commitment — A Vital Factor

Recently, I wrote several colleagues in AID who have observed the performance of universities in international development assistance efforts over the years and asked what they perceived to be the key factor in the success or failure of such efforts. Without exception, all said that the principal factor was the degree of university commitment to such programs. One person commented that all universities have the talent; experience can be gained quickly; but, the element that is almost always lacking when performance is inadequate, is *commitment*.

These colleagues have suggested that such a sense of university commitment has several manifestations:

- The university induces, selects and sends its very best faculty and administrative personnel on long-term overseas assignments — the kind of people most difficult to spare;

- It gives high-level, executive attention to the special policies and procedures needed to assure that individual faculty member's promotion, tenure and prestige benefit, rather than suffer, from overseas assignments;
- It develops special support for its overseas activities, including library resources, opportunities for foreign language improvement, and so forth;
- It places truly top-level people as field chiefs of party and refrains from attempting to run the field programs from the campus;
- It makes international programs just as much an integral part of its overall university program as those components concerned with domestic matters.

Now let me pursue this last point. Historically, we have looked upon our foreign aid programs as a national, thus Federal Government, responsibility. They were considered to be carried out for humanitarian reasons, or in the interest of U.S. foreign policy objectives, or to improve the plight of hungry, sick and poverty-ridden people as a means of avoiding social unrest, political instability, and even war.

An International Mission for State Universities

The members of this Association are *state* institutions and are normally not funded for activities related, primarily, to foreign policy goals and objectives. Consequently, when universities have become involved in international development assistance activities, they have had to rely primarily upon Federal funding of projects which are not considered a part of the central mission of a state university.

Colleges of agriculture are concerned primarily with the problems and development potentials of agriculture in their respective states. Yet, we must recognize that these state-related or domestic responsibilities are impacted greatly by international issues, and I would suggest that colleges of agriculture must address these issues just as they would deal with other matters affecting agriculture in the respective states.

It is easy to see how the Soviet grain embargo affected the corn growers in the Midwest. However, foreign markets for agricultural products may be influenced even more significantly in other ways.

Our Nation's agriculture has the capacity to substantially increase its output. The future well-being of the American farmer and related businesses and industries will be impacted greatly by the farmer's ability to market his increased production at prices sufficient to ensure reasonable returns. The future growth in demand for U.S. agricultural commodities, however, will, for the most part, neither be in the United States nor will it occur primarily in

the more industrialized countries of Western Europe and Japan, which account for approximately two-thirds of our current agricultural exports. As in the United States, these countries are experiencing a relatively low rate of population growth and have reached levels of consumer income and food demand where further substantial increases in per capita consumption of agricultural commodities cannot be expected.

Export Market Potential

The greatest potential for growth in demand for U. S. agricultural commodities is found in the middle- and low-income developing countries. This is where major food deficits now exist, where the most rapid rates of population growth are occurring, and where there is the potential for substantial increases in per capita food consumption. As consumer income and living standards improve so does per capita food consumption. This export market potential will be realized as these Third World countries improve their economics and develop the means to buy the products of the American farmer.

John Naisbitt, in his best-selling book *Megatrends*, suggests that, in the past, the more affluent developing nations have justified their aid to their poor neighbors on the basis that it was morally right to provide such help. He emphasizes, however, that while it is still morally right to do this, there is another, perhaps more compelling motivation — the self-interest of the more developed countries. He further states: "Only by developing the Third World, will the North (the industrialized nations) be assured of adequate markets for its goods. In an interdependent world, aid is not charity; it is investment. And it is an especially strategic investment, considering that traditional markets are becoming saturated."⁴

Naisbitt provides a very compelling rationale for U. S. involvement in the development of Third World countries — our own self-interest. He reinforces our contention that international development activities can contribute to increasing export markets for U. S. farm products. In view of this, I suggest that such efforts could be regarded as an integral part of the responsibilities of the colleges of agriculture, responsibilities associated with improvement of agriculture in their respective states.

Obviously, no one college has the capability of addressing these problems alone. However, the total U. S. college of agriculture community, or a significant segment thereof, can, collectively, make a major contribution to the improvement of agriculture in developing countries.

But what about the often stated concern that U. S. efforts to assist in the development of agriculture in Third World countries would contribute not to expanding markets for U. S. agricultural products but rather to greater

competition and ultimately to smaller export markets. Such concerns, on the surface, would appear to be valid. However, there is much evidence to suggest that this is not the case — in fact, that the very opposite is true.

Higher Incomes — Greater Demand for Food

Most developing countries have agriculturally based economies, with most of the population employed in the agricultural sector, usually at very low income levels. Improvements in agriculture have a multiplier effect by increasing per capita income, generating consumer demand and stimulating the development of other businesses and industries. Experience has shown that as incomes improve, consumer expenditures for food increase sharply, resulting in substantially greater demand for food than the increased domestic production can accommodate. Therefore, this higher income and greater purchasing power contribute to greater food imports.

Higher incomes also contribute to changing dietary patterns, with consumers shifting to more meat and animal products and less cereals. Such shifts contribute to expanded imports of either animal products or the feed to produce these products domestically.

There is well-documented evidence that increasing agricultural production in Third World countries does, in fact, contribute to substantial expansion in agricultural imports. For example, a University of Illinois study found that 10 developing countries, having rapid rates of growth in agricultural production in the 1970's, increased their food imports during that period by an average of 68 percent. Ten other countries, having the slowest rates of growth in agricultural production during the same period, increased food imports by only 3 percent.⁵

John Mellor, of the International Food Policy Research Institute, reports that 16 developing countries with the fastest growth rates in basic food production more than doubled their food imports during the 15-year period, 1961-76. Mellor concludes: "These data demonstrate that although it is possible for rapid growth, low-income countries to achieve impressive increases in basic food production, it is unlikely that such production will keep pace with the rate of growth in demand during this phase of development."⁶

Taiwan represents one of the greatest success stories of any developing country since World War II. Substantial improvements in the agricultural sector have helped to make possible a significant improvement in the country's total economy. This, in turn, contributed to tremendous increases in imports of agricultural commodities. For example, in 1950-52, Taiwan was a net exporter of cereals, primarily rice, and imported only 70,000 metric tons of wheat and no coarse grains. Thirty years later, Taiwan imported 640,000 tons of wheat and 3.5 million tons of coarse grains, representing an approximate sixtyfold

increase in total cereal imports. During this period, total domestic consumption of cereals went up approximately fivefold and meat production increased over sevenfold. Imported cereals represented 57 percent of total cereal utilization in 1980-82 — up from zero in 1950-51 and 12.7 percent in 1960-62.⁷

This is a dramatic example of how agricultural imports have expanded in a country during a period when significant improvements were being made in its agricultural sector and overall economy.

Economic Growth — Food Imports

USDA studies have indicated that when the poorer developing countries expand food imports, the United States is the exporting country that benefits most. An Economic Research Service study has shown that for every 10 percent gain in per capita income in countries averaging less than \$1,000 annual income per person, imports of U.S. agricultural commodities went up by 33 percent, 25 percent, 19 percent and 14 percent, respectively, in the four periods studied (1959-61, 1964, 1971-73, and 1979-81). The report concludes: “. . . it seems axiomatic that economic growth is the way to increase a nation’s ability to import.”⁸

We should recognize that under some circumstances, improvements in agriculture may result in loss of markets for specific U.S. agricultural products. However, there is strong evidence to support the contention that generally, and in the long run, agricultural development and related economic growth in Third World countries contribute to expanded U.S. export markets and are in the best interest of American agriculture.

I have stated the case for U.S. agricultural colleges making a greater commitment to helping Third World countries develop their agricultural sectors — not merely as some altruistic, charitable or humanitarian gesture, but because such efforts ultimately benefit agriculture in their respective states by expanding export markets for farm products. If this is a valid concept, and I believe it is, these colleges and their state governments which support them should be willing to commit the resources needed to do the job effectively.

I doubt, however, if we can expect state legislatures to fund international agricultural development assistance projects *per se*. This will likely continue to be a national responsibility. However, *the state should be willing to support greatly strengthened and expanded international dimensions for their colleges of agriculture*. Such emphasis is needed to allow these colleges to carry out effectively their domestic or state-related responsibilities. Such strengthening will also contribute greatly to the effectiveness of such colleges in international development assistance activities.

It has become almost trite to talk about a shrinking globe and the interdependence of the people on it. It is obvious that with the pace that people, trade, and information move across national boundaries, we must have a better knowledge of other countries, their people, their cultures, and their languages if we hope to prosper, or, perhaps, even survive. With American farmers currently exporting the products of some 40 percent of their cropland and with the potential to greatly increase this level, we must be doing much more to understand, cultivate and develop markets for these products. And U. S. colleges of agriculture should be giving leadership to such efforts in their teaching, research and extension programs, just as they have contributed to the development of domestic markets.

International Education

To what extent are the teaching programs of our colleges giving future agricultural leaders an understanding of international issues and better preparing them for the world in which they must live and work?

Someone asked a Japanese businessman what foreign language he spoke. He smiled and replied: "The language of my customers, of course." How many of our colleges of agriculture have a foreign language requirement in their curriculum? How important is this, given the fact that a major and growing share of the markets for U. S. agricultural commodities is in countries where English is not the native language?

Some time ago, I saw posted on the wall of a sixth-grade classroom the following statement:

*"We must study geography so that for us
There is no foreign place.
We must study humanity so that for us
There is no foreign person."*

This states the case well for learning more about our world and the people in it. But how well is our educational system serving this need?

Our schools and colleges are generally considered to be doing a poor job of giving their students a needed appreciation and awareness of international issues. The President's Commission on Foreign Languages and International Studies, in 1979, reported that the lack of emphasis on international education in this country is "profoundly alarming" and stated: "The problem extends from our elementary schools where instruction in foreign languages and cultures has virtually disappeared to the threatened imminent loss of some of the world's leading centers for advanced training and research on foreign languages. Such specific educational neglect, moreover, is reflected in public uncertainty about the relationship between American interests and goals and those of other peoples and cultures."⁹

The President's Commission found that only 15 percent of U. S. high school students were studying any foreign language. Furthermore, a recent survey of high school seniors indicated that over 40 percent of the students interviewed could not locate Egypt on a map and 20 percent did not know the location of France or China. Only 5 percent of college students preparing to become teachers were found to take any courses related to international affairs or foreign areas.

A 1980 national survey indicated an appalling lack of knowledge of key world issues by college students, with college seniors scoring only 8 points higher than freshmen on a test dealing with such issues.¹⁰

Given the sad state of affairs as reflected by these studies, what are our colleges of agriculture doing to correct these deficiencies?

The issues raised in this paper suggest that colleges of agriculture should give careful attention to the adequacy of their current curriculum in terms of preparing students for the role they must play in an increasingly complex and interdependent world. What about greater emphasis upon foreign languages? What about more attention to international trade issues? What about greater emphasis on area studies to give students a better understanding of important regions of the world, their people, and cultures?

International Dimensions for Extension and Research

Just as resident instruction programs can give the college student a better understanding of such matters, the Cooperative Extension Service (CES) through its public affairs educational programs can help farm families and others gain a better appreciation of international issues which affect so many facets of their lives.

Incidentally, let me commend the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy for the excellent policy paper on "The International Mission of the Cooperative Extension Service." The paper recognizes the vital role which the CES can play in U.S. international agricultural development programs as well as in domestic educational programs "aimed at assisting farmers" in gaining a better understanding of the international dimension of our agricultural commerce with other nations.¹¹ The implementation of the policy proposals set forth in this paper would provide a significant international thrust to the programs of the Cooperative Extension Service which I believe is greatly needed.

Let me also commend the Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP) for its 1984 paper dealing with research related to agricultural trade.¹² This report points out that despite the fact that the United States is exporting the production from 2 in 5 acres, efforts in trade research are quite

limited. Furthermore, most of what is done is fragmented and scattered — doing little to help domestic producers deal with the complex problems associated with exporting their products. The ESCOP report calls for a sizeable effort in research to develop a better understanding of trade problems as well as effective trade strategies and policies. Much of this work should, obviously, be directed toward Third World countries where large potential markets for agricultural products exist.

The Title XII Collaborative Research Support Program (CRSP) is demonstrating in dramatic fashion how research programs, carried out cooperatively between the United States and developing country institutions, are benefiting the agriculture of both the United States and the developing countries. This further emphasizes how our own domestic agricultural interests may be served through cooperative efforts with Third World countries and suggests opportunities for expanding such efforts.

These are activities and areas of emphasis which U.S. colleges of agriculture should give significantly increased attention as a part of their ongoing responsibilities. And this should be done whether the colleges are involved in foreign development assistance efforts or not. I would add, however, that if such an expanded international dimension is built into the colleges' regular ongoing programs, they should greatly enhance their ability to contribute meaningfully to the Nation's foreign development assistance program.

Summary Observations

Perhaps the essence of my remarks could be summarized by drawing upon the observations of a perceptive colleague in the Agency for International Development who has been a close observer of AID-university relations over the past three decades. In response to my request for comments on the subject of this relationship, he expressed these thoughts:

"Often we find ourselves thinking as if it were somehow unnatural for a university to assume any obligations for international work. Yet perhaps such programs are not nearly as esoteric as many activities totally accepted as normal. Why is it less organic (to a university's interests) to equip the university with experience and knowledge about the developing parts of the world where its students may one day work and where its farmers now find their markets, than to equip it to work in astronomical observations of the stars where it is unlikely that any of its students or faculty will ever visit? Why should faculty be reluctant to develop language capabilities to deal competently with foreign friends or adversaries? How can scientists accept geographic boundaries on the sources (or applications) of their knowledge? Can we really believe students, preparing now for careers which peak two decades from now, are well educated if taught entirely by provincial teachers?

Can the “publish or perish” drive be allowed to so tyrannize young faculty that they dare not tackle tough problems in their international contexts for fear of reducing the number of publications and thereby their promotional opportunities?

“Today, university leadership must recognize that its own constituents’ interests, its students’ careers, and its own moral reasons for existence cannot be solved by treating science as if it were bounded by state lines, students as if they were to live in isolation from world affairs, and their general publics as if the economic destitution or progress of the poorer countries did not matter.”¹³

With such a challenging statement, I would “rest my case.”

Thank you.

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